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**A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK
ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1858**

"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."
1 Corinthians 2:2

CORINTH was situated in the midst of a people who admired eloquence and wisdom. This epistle was written in the age of orators and philosophers. The apostle Paul was a man of profound learning, he had been educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the wisdom of the East. We are quite sure he was a man of a very capacious mind, for although his writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit chose as His instrument a man evidently possessing the capacity for strong and vigorous thought and argument, and as for his oratorical powers, I believe that, if he had chosen to cultivate them, they would have been of the very first order, for we have in some of his epistles eloquence more sublime than ever fell from the lips of Cicero or Demosthenes.

The temptation would exist, in the mind of any ordinary man entering into such a city as Corinth, to say within himself, "I will endeavor to excel in all the graces of oratory, I have a blessed Gospel to preach that is worthy of the highest talents that ever can be consecrated to it." "I am," Paul might have said to himself, "largely gifted in the matter of eloquence, I must now endeavor to carefully polish my periods, and so to fashion my address as to excel all the orators who now attract the Corinthians to listen to them. This I may do very laudably, for I will still keep in view my intention of preaching Jesus Christ, and I will preach Jesus Christ with such a flow of noble language that I shall be able to win my audience to consider the subject."

But the apostle resolved to do no such thing. "No," said he, "before I enter the gates of Corinth, this is my firm determination, if any good is to be done there, if any are led to believe in Christ the Messiah, their belief shall be the result of hearing the Gospel, and not of my eloquence. It shall never be said, 'Oh! no wonder that Christianity spreads, see what an able advocate it has,' but it shall be said, 'How mighty must be the grace of God which has convinced these persons by such simple preaching, and brought them to know the Lord Jesus Christ by such humble instrumentality as that of the apostle Paul!'"

He resolved to put a curb upon his fiery tongue, he determined that he would be slow in speech in the midst of them, and instead of magnifying himself, he would magnify his office, and magnify the grace of God by denying himself the full use of those powers, which, had they been dedicated to God—as indeed they were—but had they been fully employed, as some would have used them, might have achieved for him the reputation of being the most eloquent preacher upon the face of the earth.

Again, he might have said, "These philosophers are very wise men, if I would be a match for them, I must be very wise too. These Corinthians are a very noble race of people, they have been for a long time under the tutorage of these talented men. I must speak as they speak, in enigmas and with many sophisms, I must always be propounding some dark problem. I need not live in the tub of Diogenes, but if I take his lantern, I may do something with it, I must try and borrow some of his wisdom. I have a profound philosophy to preach to these clever people, and if I liked to preach that philosophy, I should dash in pieces all their theories concerning mental and moral science. I have found out a wondrous secret, and I might stand in the midst of the market place and cry, 'Eureka, Eureka, I have found it,' but I do not care to build my Gospel upon the foundation of human wisdom. No, if any are brought to believe

in Christ, it shall be from the simple unadorned Gospel, plainly preached in unpolished language. The faith of my hearers, if they are converted to God, shall not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Can you not see, dear friends, that the apostle had very good reasons for coming to this determination? When a man says that he is determined to do a certain thing, it looks as if he knew that it was a difficult thing to do. So, I think it must have been a hard thing for the apostle to determine to keep to this one subject. "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." I am sure that nine-tenths of the ministers of this age could not have done it.

Fancy Paul going through the streets of Corinth, and hearing a philosopher explain the current theory of creation. He is telling the people something about the world springing out of certain things that previously existed, and the apostle Paul thinks, "I could easily correct that man's mistakes, I could tell him that the Lord created all things in six days, and rested on the seventh, and show him in the book of Genesis the inspired account of the creation.

"But no," he says to himself, "I have a more important message than that to deliver." Still, he must have felt as if he would have liked to set him right, for you know, when you hear a man uttering a gross falsehood, you feel as if you would like to go in, and do battle with him. But instead of that, the apostle just thinks, "It is not my business to set the people right about their theory of the creation of the world. All that I have to do is to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Besides, in Corinth, there was now and then sure to be a political struggle, and I have no doubt that the apostle Paul felt for his people, the Jews, and he would have liked to see all his Jewish kindred have the privilege of citizenship. Sometimes the Corinthians would hold a public meeting, in which they would support the opinion that the Jews ought not to have citizenship in Corinth, might not the apostle have made a speech at such a gathering? If he had been asked to do so, he would have said, "I know nothing about such matters, all I know is Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

They had political lectures no doubt, in Corinth, and one man delivered a lecture upon this subject and another upon that, in fact, all kinds of wonderful themes taken from the ancient poets were descended upon by different men. Did not the apostle Paul take one of the lectures? Did he not say, "I may throw a little Gospel into it, and so do some good?" No, he said, "I come here as Christ's minister and I will never be anything else but Christ's minister, I will never address the Corinthians in any other character than that of Christ's ambassador. For one thing only have I determined to know, and that is, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Would to God that all the ministers of this age had determined to do the same!

Do you not sometimes find a minister who takes a prominent part in an election, who thinks it his business to stand forth on the political platform of the nation, and did it ever strike you that he was out of his place, that it was his business to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified? Do we not see, at every corner of our streets, a lecture advertised to be delivered on this and that and the other subject, by this minister and that, who leave their pulpits in order that they may be enabled to deliver lectures upon all kinds of subjects?

"No," Paul would have said, "If I cannot spread the Gospel of Christ legitimately, by preaching it openly, I will not do it by taking an absurd title for my sermon, for the Gospel shall stand or fall on its own merits, and with no enticing words of man's wisdom will I preach it." Let anyone say to me, "Come and give your able advocacy for this or that reform," and my answer would be, "I do not know anything about that subject, for I have determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

As Albert Barnes very well says, "This should be the resolution of every minister of the Gospel. This is his business—not to be a politician, not to engage in the strifes and controversies of men, not to be merely a good farmer, or scholar, not to mingle with his people in festive circles and enjoyments, not to be a man of taste and philosophy, and distinguished mainly for refinement of manners, not to be a profound philosopher or metaphysician, but to make Christ crucified the grand object of his attention,

and to seek always and everywhere to make Him known. He is not to be ashamed anywhere of the humbling doctrine that Christ was crucified. In this, he is to glory. Though the world may ridicule, though philosophers may sneer, though the rich and the gay may deride it, yet this is to be the grand object of interest to him, and at no time, and in no society, is he to be ashamed of it. It matters not what are the amusements of society around him, what fields of science, or gain, or ambition, are open before him, the minister of Christ is to know only Christ and Him crucified alone."

"If he cultivates science, it is to be that he may the more successfully explain and vindicate the Gospel. If he becomes in any manner familiar with the works of art and of taste, it is that he may more successfully show to those who cultivate them the superior beauty and excellence of the cross. If he studies the plans and the employments of men, it is that he may more successfully meet them in those plans, and more successfully speak to them of the great plan of redemption."

"The preaching of the cross is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success. That which has in it much respecting the divine mission, the dignity, the works, the doctrines, the person, and the atonement of Christ, will be successful. So it was in the time of the apostles, so it was in the Reformation, so it was in the Moravian missions, so it has been in all revivals of religion."

"There is a power about that kind of preaching which philosophy and human reason have not. 'Christ is God's great ordinance' for the salvation of the world, and we meet the crimes and alleviate the woes of the world just in proportion as we hold the cross up as appointed to overcome the one, and to pour the balm of consolation into the other."

Would that all ministers would keep this in mind, that they should do nothing outside the office of the ministry, that to be once a minister is to be a minister forever, and never to be a politician, never to be a lecturer, that to be once a preacher is to be a preacher of Christ's holy Gospel until Christ takes us to Himself to begin to sing the new song before the throne.

Now, brethren and sisters, I have discharged my duty in saying these things. If they apply to any ministers whom you admire, I cannot help it. There is the text, and what do we learn from it but this, that the apostle Paul determined to do everything as a minister of Christ. And my dear brethren and sisters, it is your duty to do this as hearers. As Christians, it is your duty and privilege to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

I. And first, with regard to THE DOCTRINES WHICH YOU BELIEVE, I beseech you, do not know anything except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

You are told by one person that such and such a system of theology is based upon the soundest principles of reason. You are told by another that the old doctrines which you have believed are not consistent with these advanced times. You will now and then be met by smart young gentlemen who will tell you that, to be what is called a Calvinist, is to be a long way behind this progressive age, "for you know," they say, "that intellectual preachers are rising up, and that it would be well if you would become a little more intellectual in the matter of preaching and hearing."

When such a remark as that is made to any one of you, I beseech you to give this answer, "I know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. If you can tell me more about Christ than I know, I will thank you, if you can instruct me as to how I may become more like Christ, how I may live nearer in fellowship with Him, how my faith in Him may become stronger, and my belief in His holy Gospel may become more firm, then I will thank you, but if you have nothing to tell me except some intellectual lore which you have with great pains accumulated, I will tell you that, although it may be a very good thing for you to preach, and for others who are intellectual to hear, I do not belong to your class, nor do I wish to belong to it, I belong to that sect everywhere spoken against, who after the way that men call heresy worship the Lord God of their fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and in the prophets. I belong to a race of people who believe that it is not the pride of intellect, nor the pomp of knowledge that can ever teach men spiritual things. I belong to those who think that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has ordained strength, and I do not believe that out of your mouth God has ordained any strength at all. I belong to the men who like to sit, with Mary, at the feet of Jesus, and to receive just

what Christ said, as Christ said it, and because Christ said it. I want no truth but what He says is truth, and no other ground for believing it but that He says it, and no better proof that it is true than that I feel and know it to be true as applied to my own heart.”

Now, dear friend, if you can do that, I will trust you anywhere—even among the wisest heretics of the age. You may go where false doctrines are rife, but you will never catch the plague of heresy while you have this golden preservative of truth, and can say, “I know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

As for myself, I can truly say, that Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is the sum of all knowledge to me, He is the highest intellectualism, He is the grandest philosophy to which my mind can attain, He is the pinnacle that rises loftier than my highest aspirations, and deeper than this great truth I wish never to fathom. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the sum total of all I want to know, and of all the doctrines which I profess and preach.

II. Next, it must be just the same in YOUR EXPERIENCE.

Brethren, I beseech you, in your experience, know nothing except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

You may go out tomorrow, not merely into the outside world, but into the church, the nominal church, and you will meet with a class of persons who take you by the ear, and who invite you into their houses, and the moment you are there, they begin to talk to you about the doctrines of the Gospel. They say nothing about Christ Jesus, but they begin at once to talk of the eternal decrees of God, of election, and of the high mysteries of the covenant of grace.

While they are talking to you, you say in your hearts, “What they are saying is true, but there is one lamentable defect in it all, their teaching is truth apart from Christ.” Conscience whispers, “The election that I believe is election in Christ. These men do not talk anything about that, but only of election. The redemption that I believe always has a very special reference to the cross of Christ. These men do not mention Christ, they talk of redemption as a commercial transaction, and say nothing about Jesus. With regard to final perseverance, I believe all that these men say, but I have been taught that the saints only persevere in consequence of their relation to Christ, these men say nothing about that.”

This minister, they say, is not sound, and that other minister is not sound, and let me tell you that if you get amongst this class of persons, you will learn to rue the day that you ever looked them in the face. If you must come into contact with them, I beseech you to say to them, “I love all truths that you hold, but my love of them can never overpower and supersede my love to Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and I tell you plainly, while I could not sit to hear erroneous doctrine, I could just as soon do that as sit to hear the truthful doctrine apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“I could not go to a place where I saw a man, dressed in gorgeous robes, who pretended to be Christ, and was not, and on the other hand, I could not go to a place where I saw Christ’s real robes, but the Master Himself was absent, for what I want is not His robe, nor His dress, I want the Master Himself, and if you preach to me dry doctrine without Jesus Christ, I tell you it will not suit my experience, for my experience is just this, that while I know my election, I can never know it except I know my union with the Lamb. I tell you plainly that I know I am redeemed, but I cannot bear think of redemption without thinking of the Savior who redeemed me. It is my boast that I shall to the end endure, but I know—each hour makes me know—that my endurance depends upon my standing in Christ, and I must have that truth preached in connection with the cross of Christ.”

Oh! Have nought to do with these people, unless it is to set them right, for you will find that they are full of the gall of bitterness, the poison of asps is under their tongue, instead of giving you things whereon your soul can feed, they will make you full of all manner of bitterness, and malice, and evil speaking against those who truly love the Lord Jesus, but who differ from them in some slight matter.

You may meet with another class of persons who will take you by the other ear, and say to you, “We too, love Christ’s doctrines, but we believe that our friends on the other side of the road are wrong. They do not preach enough experience,” and you say, “Well, I think I have got amongst the people who will suit me now,” and you hear the minister insisting that the most precious experience in the world is to

know your own corruption, to feel the evil of the human heart, to have that filthy dunghill turned over and over in all its reeking noisomeness, and exposed before the sun, and after hearing the sermon, which is full of pretended humility, you rise from your seats more proud than you ever were in your lives, determined now that you will begin to glory in that very thing which you once counted as dross. The things which you were ashamed once to speak of, you now think should be your boast.

That deep experience which was your disgrace shall now become the crown of your rejoicing. You speak to the dear brothers and sisters who imbibe this view, and they tell you to seek first, not the kingdom of God and His righteousness, but the hidden things of the prison, the discovery of the unrighteousness and unholiness of the soul.

O my dear friends, if you wish to have your lives made miserable, if you want to be led back to the bondage of Egypt, if you want to have Pharaoh's rope put round your necks once again, take their motto for your motto, but if you wish to live as I believe Christ would have you live, I would entreat you to say, "No, it does me good sometimes to hear of the evil heart, but I have made a determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and you do not tell me anything about Him."

These men preach one Sunday upon the leper, but do they preach, the next Sunday, upon the leper healed? These men tell all about the filthy state of the human heart, but they say little or nothing about that river that is to cleanse and purify it. They say much about the disease, but not so much about the Physician, and if you attend their ministry very long, you will be obliged to say, "I shall get into such a doleful condition, that I shall be tempted to imitate Judas, and go out, and hang myself. So, good morning to you, for I have determined to know nothing in my experience but Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

I would be very earnest in trying to warn you about this matter, for there is a growing tendency, among a certain order of professing Christians, to set up something in experience beside Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Tell me that your experience is all concerned with the Lord Jesus Christ, and I will rejoice in it, the more of Christ there is in it, the more precious it is. Tell me that your experience is full of the knowledge of your own corruptions, and I answer, "If there is not in it a mixture also of the knowledge of Christ, and unless the knowledge of Christ predominates to a large degree, your experience is wood, hay, and stubble, and must be consumed, and you must suffer loss."

By the way, let me tell you a little story about Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. I am a great lover of John Bunyan, but I do not believe him infallible, and the other day I met with a story about him which I think a very good one. There was a young man, in Edinburgh, who wished to be a missionary. He was a wise young man, so he thought, "If I am to be a missionary, there is no need for me to transport myself far away from home, I may as well be a missionary in Edinburgh." There's a hint to some of you ladies, who give away tracts in your district, but never give your servant Mary one.

Well, this young man started, and determined to speak to the first person he met. He met one of those old fishwives, those of us who have seen them can never forget them, they are extraordinary women indeed. So, stepping up to her, he said, "Here you are, coming along with your burden on your back, let me ask you if you have got another burden, a spiritual burden."

"What!" she asked, "do you mean that burden in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? Because, if you do, young man, I got rid of that many years ago, probably before you were born. But I went a better way to work than the pilgrim did. The evangelist that John Bunyan talks about was one of your parsons that do not preach the gospel, for he said, 'Keep that light in your eye, and run to the wicket-gate.' Why, man alive! that was not the place for him to run to. He should have said, 'Do you see that cross? Run there at once!' But instead of that, he sent the poor pilgrim to the wicket-gate first, and much good he got by going there! He got tumbling into the slough, and was like to have been killed by it."

"But did not you," the young man asked, "go through any Slough of Despond?" "Yes, I did, but I found it a great deal easier going through with my burden off than with it on my back."

The old woman was quite right. John Bunyan put the getting rid of the burden too far off from the commencement of the pilgrimage. If he meant to show what usually happens, he was right, but if he

meant to show what ought to have happened, he was wrong. We must not say to the sinner, "Now, sinner, if you will be saved, go to the baptismal pool, go to the wicket-gate, go to the church, do this or that." No, the cross should be right in front of the wicket-gate, and we should say to the sinner, "Throw yourself down there, and you are safe, but you are not safe till you can cast off your burden, and lie at the foot of the cross, and find peace in Jesus."

III. Let me conclude by saying, brethren and sisters, determine, from this hour, that IN YOUR FAITH you will know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I am perfectly certain that I have not a grain of my own merit to trust in, and not so much as an atom of creature strength to rely upon, but I find myself often, during the seven days of the week, relying upon merit of my own that does not exist, and depending upon strength of my own which I at the same time confess has no existence at all.

You and I often call the Pope antichrist, but do we not ourselves often play the antichrist too? The Pope sets himself as the head of the church, but do not we go further by setting ourselves up sometimes to be our own saviors? We do not say so, except in a sort of still small voice, like the mutterings of the old wizards. It is not a loud, outspoken lie, because we should know then how to answer it, "but now," whispers the devil, "how well you did that!" and then we begin to rely upon our works, and Satan says, "You prayed so well yesterday, you will never be cold in your prayers again, and you will be so strong in faith that you will never doubt your God again."

It is the old golden calf that is set up once more, for although it was ground to powder, it seems to have the art of coming together again. After we have been told, ten times over, that we cannot have any merit of our own, we begin to act as if we had, and the man who tells you in his doctrine, that all his fresh springs are in Christ, yet thinks and acts just as if he had fresh springs of his own. He mourns as if all his dependence was upon himself, and groans as if his salvation depended upon his own merits.

We often get talking, in our own souls, as if we did not believe the Gospel at all, but were hoping to be saved by our own works, and our own creature performances. Oh, for a stronger determination to know nothing henceforth but Jesus Christ and Him crucified! I would to God that I could make that resolution myself, and that you would all make it with me.

I heard once of a countryman, who was preaching one day, and he preached very nicely the first half of his sermon, but towards the end he entirely broke down, and his brother said to him, "Tom, I can tell you why you did not preach well at the end of your sermon. It was because you got on so nicely at first that devil whispered, 'Well done, Tom, you are getting on very well,' and as soon as the devil said that, you thought, 'Tom is a very fine fellow,' and then the Lord left you."

Happy would it have been for Tom if he could have determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and not to have known Tom at all. That is what I desire to know myself, for if I know nothing but the power which comes from on high, I can never be less powerful at one time than at another, and I can glory in my infirmity because it makes room for Christ's power to rest upon me.

*"I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own power may rest on me:
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song."*

It would be a good resolution for you, brethren, and for myself, to determine to know nothing about ourselves, and nothing about our own doings. Now, friend John, begin to think nothing about yourself, and to know nothing but Jesus Christ. Let John go where he likes, and be you relying not upon John's strength, but upon Christ's. And you, Peter, know nothing about Peter at all, and do not boast, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will I never deny thee," but know that Peter's Lord Jesus is living inside Peter, and then you may go on comfortably enough.

Determine, Christian, that by the grace of God, it shall be your endeavor to keep your eye single, to keep your faith fixed alone on the Lord Jesus, without any addition of your own works, or your own strength, and determining that, you may go on your way rejoicing, singing of the cross of Christ as your boast, your glory, and your all. We are now coming to the table of our Master, and I hope that this will be our determination there, to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and may the Lord give us His blessing! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

Psalm 22

This Psalm is headed, “To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar,”—or as the margin renders it, “the hind of the morning,”—“A Psalm of David.” It begins in the very depths of the Master’s sorrow, when this great and bitter cry escaped His lips,—

Verse 1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Every word is emphatic: “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” “All others may forsake Me, and I need not be greatly troubled at their absence, but ‘why hast thou forsaken me?’” “Why hast thou *forsaken me?*” I understand why You do smite Me, for I am the Shepherd predestined to be smitten for the flock, but ‘why hast thou *forsaken me?*’” “Why hast thou forsaken *me?*—Your only begotten, Your well-beloved Son—‘why hast thou forsaken *Me?*’”

1. *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

“Why have I no inflowing of Your love—no enjoyment of Your presence—no whispers from Your heart? I am left alone—left utterly—left on the cross—left in My direst need.” God’s adopted children do not usually talk like this, such a lament as this has not often come even from the martyrs for the faith, for as a rule, they have had God with them in their hour of deepest agony, but here was One, who was far greater than they, who had to yet endure suffering from which they were exempted—the only perfect One was forsaken by God. You know that if was because He stood in our stead that the Savior had this pre-eminence in suffering and sorrow.

2. *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

Think of what a weight that unanswered prayer was upon the soul of the Well-beloved. Have you ever felt such a burden as that? Then, you are not alone in that experience, for He who is infinitely better than you can ever be had to think over His day prayers and His night prayers which, for a while, were not answered.

3. *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Follow the example of your Lord, poor troubled soul. Find no fault with your God, even though He should forsake you. Call Him holy, even though He should leave you, and when He seems not to hear your prayers, yet do not forget His praises.

4-6. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*

Think of our divine Lord thus taking the very lowest place, and becoming, as it were, something less than man—just that little crimson worm which has simply a life made up of blood. Christ likens Himself to it as He says, “I am a worm, and no man.”

7-8. *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

Oh! these were cruel and cutting words. Like a sharp razor, they cut to the very heart of our divine Master as He heard His enemies exulting even over His faith, as though it had come to nothing, for now JEHOVAH Himself had forsaken Him, and left Him to die alone upon the tree.

9-10. *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*

Sometimes, we also may derive great comfort from this truth to which our Savior here refers. When we could not help ourselves in the least degree, the Lord preserved us, so will He not again help us when we are at our worst? You who have reached your second childhood may reflect with gratitude and hope upon the way in which God took care of you in your first childhood. Then, you certainly were entirely dependent upon Him, yet you fared well, and so you shall if each sense shall fail you—if the power of moving shall be taken away, and the power of sight, and the power of hearing, yet the Lord who blessed you when you were just born, will still preserve you right to the end.

You remember how the Lord puts this truth in Isaiah 46:4—“Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

Our Savior, having comforted Himself thus, falls to praying again:—

11-12. *Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*

These were the Pharisees, the chief priests, and the strong Roman soldiers that compassed our Savior when He was upon the cross.

13-14. *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

Can you not see your Savior hanging on the accursed tree—every particle of Him as it were loosened from its fellow by the fever raging in His whole being, and the anguish and deep depression of His spirit?

15. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;*

Such was the intensity of His anguish that the fever within Him turned His mouth into an oven, and His tongue was so dried up that it could scarcely stir.

15. *And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

As if His whole body was prepared to go back into its primary elements. He feels in Himself the sentence pronounced upon the first Adam, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,”

16. *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:*

These were the common people, the rabble, the multitude that thronged around, barking at Him like a pack of hungry hounds.

16. *They pierced my hands and my feet.*

This little sentence shows that this psalm must relate to the Lord Jesus. Truly did David see Him in vision. It happened not to David to have his hands and feet pierced, but this was the portion of David’s Master and Lord, He could indeed say, “They pierced my hands and my feet.”

17. *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

He is emaciated through His fasting and all the agony He has endured, and His bones seem to break through His skin by reason of the cruel scourging to which He had been subjected.

18-19. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength,—*

That is, El—the name He gave to God in the first verse, “O my strong One,”—

19-21. *Haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*

Did You notice that flash of light gleaming through the darkness, “Thou hast heard me”? Perhaps it was at that moment that the sun again shone forth, at any rate, it is clear that the lost light had returned to our suffering Lord, for the rest of this divine soliloquy is full of comfort and confidence.

22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren:*

His first thought, even in His agony on the cross, was about them, and He seemed to say, “When I have risen from the dead, I will tell them all about this time of trial, and through the ages to come, I will tell My people how You did help Me—the greatest of all sufferers—and that You will help them also. I

was left for a time, and yet I was not finally left. I cried, ‘Lama sabachthani,’ and yet I triumphed, even then, and so shall they. They shall do as I have done—confide and conquer.”

22. *In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

And you know that He did so, He stood in the midst of His people, and told them what God had done, and spiritually, He stands in our midst at this moment, and He leads our songs of praise unto JEHOVAH.

23-24. *Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

What a change of note! If men could hear us speak when we are in the depths of sorrow, they might conclude that God had forsaken us, but when we get out again, how quickly we eat our words, and how soon we begin to tell the goodness of the Lord! Then we lift up the joyous strain, “O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

25. *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*

Christ still praises God in the great congregation. On my way to this evening’s service, I called to see one of our dear brethren who is very ill, and I was much refreshed with a sweet thing that he said—“When we all get to heaven, we shall feel quite at home there, for you know, sir, we have worshipped in a great congregation for these many years.” And so we shall. There is something most exhilarating and refreshing in going with a multitude to keep holy day, the more, the merrier; but what shall be the joy in heaven, where the number of the redeemed cannot be counted, and all shall be continually praising God? This was one of the joys that was set before Christ, for which “He endured the cross, despising the shame.”

26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied:*

Even in the time of His great agony, our Lord was thinking of you hidden ones, you little ones, who think yourselves worth nothing. Christ says that He was finding bread for you, for He gives us His flesh to eat, that flesh which is meat indeed.

26. *They shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*

Because He died, all who trust in Him shall live forever. Oh! how sweetly does He die, with the thought of their eternal bliss upon His mind!

27. *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

He sees the result of His death, He beholds the fruit of His soul-travail, and His heart is glad within Him.

28-31. *For the kingdom is the LORD’s: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

The psalm really ends with almost the last cry of our Lord upon the cross, “It is finished.” So the whole psalm is a window through which we can see into the inmost heart of Christ when it was being torn upon the cross.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.